REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the present application in view of the reasons that follow.

No claims are being amended, and claims 1-12 and 21-22 remain pending in this application.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-7, 9-12 and 21-22 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 6,549,657 to Ohta ("Ohta") in view of U.S. Patent 5,724,444 to Yamanishi ("Yamanishi"). Claim 8 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Ohta in view of Yamanishi and U.S. Patent Application Publication 2001/0013953 to Uekusa ("Uekusa"). Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections for at least the following reasons.

Independent claim 1 recites "wherein the image data generating means has a background density averaging section and a character density averaging section, where the first image data is color image data comprising plural color components and where at least one color component is associated with a character or a line figure, the image data generating means generates second image data by replacing the first image data other than said at least one color component with data outputted from the background density averaging section, and by replacing the first image data of said at least one color component with data outputted from the character density averaging section." Thus, in claim 1, the image data generating means generates second image data by replacing the first image data other than the at least one color component with data outputted from the background density averaging section, and by replacing the first image data of said at least one color component with data outputted from the character density averaging section. The references cited in the rejections of the claims fail to disclose at least these features in the context of claim 1.

The Office Action relies on Yamanishi for disclosing the image data generating means with background density averaging section and character density averaging section as

recited in claim 1. Yamanishi, however, merely discloses generating density-frequency data used for correcting the pixel density, where the density-frequency data must be ultimately converted into a control signal. In claim 1, by contrast, the data that is outputted at the background density averaging section and the character density averaging section is image data because the data replaces first image data. The density-frequency data generated by Yamanishi is not image data, and Yamanishi does not disclose both a background density averaging section and character density averaging section which respectively output image data. Yamanashi fails to disclose the image data generating means with background density averaging section and character density averaging section as recited in claim 1 for at least this reason.

Accordingly, even if Ohta were modified according to the teachings of Yamanashi, the resultant structure would not have all the features of claim 1.

Uekusa was cited for other features of the claims, but fails to cure the deficiencies of Ohta and Yamanashi.

Independent claims 21 and 22 respectively recite "wherein the image data generating unit has a background density averaging section and a character density averaging section, where the first image data is color image data comprising plural color components and where at least one color component is associated with a character or a line figure, the image data generating unit generates second image data by replacing the first image data other than said at least one color component with data outputted from the background density averaging section, and by replacing the first image data of said at least one color component with data outputted from the character density averaging section" and "wherein the first image data is color image data comprising plural color components and where at least one color component is associated with a character or a line figure, the generating second image data comprises: generating average background density data of the first image data; generating average

character density data of the first image data; and generating second image data by replacing the first image data other than said at least one color component with the average background density data, and by replacing the first image data of said at least one color component with the average character density data", and thus are patentable for reasons analogous to claim 1.

The dependent claims are patentable for at least the same reasons as their respective independent claims, as well as for further patentable features recited therein.

Applicants believe that the present application is now in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration of the application as amended is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

Respectfully submitted,

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THE COMMISSIONER IS HEREBY AUTHORIZED TO CHARGE ANY ADDITIONAL FEES WHICH MAY BE REQUIRED REGARDING THIS APPLICATION UNDER 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, OR CREDIT ANY OVERPAYMENT, TO DEPOSIT ACCOUNT NO. 19-0741. SHOULD NO PROPER PAYMENT BE ENCLOSED HEREWITH, AS BY A CHECK BEING IN THE WRONG AMOUNT, UNSIGNED, POST-DATED, OTHERWISE IMPROPER OR INFORMAL OR EVEN ENTIRELY MISSING, THE COMMISSIONER IS AUTHORIZED TO CHARGE THE UNPAID AMOUNT TO DEPOSIT ACCOUNT NO. 19-0741. IF ANY EXTENSIONS OF TIME ARE NEEDED FOR TIMELY ACCEPTANCE OF PAPERS SUBMITTED HEREWITH, APPLICANTS HEREBY PETITIONS FOR SUCH EXTENSION UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 AND AUTHORIZES PAYMENT OF ANY SUCH EXTENSIONS FEES TO DEPOSIT ACCOUNT NO. 19-0741.